

AFGHANISTAN



Afghanistan On March 27, 2009, President Obama stated that “the core goal of the U.S. must be to disrupt, dismantle, and defeat al Qaeda and its safe havens in Pakistan, and to prevent their return to Pakistan or Afghanistan.” This goal cannot be achieved by military means alone and must be complemented by a comprehensive and robust civilian effort to work with Afghans to improve governance capacity, increase economic development, continue reconstruction, and implement effective counter-narcotics programs. The President’s new strategy calls for integrating counter-insurgency operations to provide increased security, with building effective local governance and promoting economic development. Increased U.S. assistance to Afghanistan in FY 2010 will help Afghans build good governance, stimulate licit economic growth through agriculture and alternative development programs, enhance the rule of law, and help stabilize communities through short-term job creation programs. The President’s FY 2010 budget request includes funding for foreign assistance programs that are essential for success in Afghanistan.

FOREIGN RELATIONS: Before the Soviet invasion, Afghanistan pursued a policy of neutrality and nonalignment in its foreign relations. After the December 1979 invasion, Afghanistan's foreign policy mirrored that of the Soviet Union. Most Western countries, including the United States, maintained small diplomatic missions in Kabul during the Soviet occupation. Repeated Taliban efforts to occupy Afghanistan's seat at the UN and Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) were unsuccessful.

The fall of the Taliban in October 2001 opened a new chapter in Afghanistan's foreign relations. Afghanistan is now an active member of the international community, and has diplomatic relations with countries from around the world. In December 2002, the six nations that border Afghanistan signed a 'Good Neighbor' Declaration, in which they pledged to respect Afghanistan's independence and territorial integrity. In 2005 Afghanistan and its South Asia neighbors held the first annual Regional Economic Cooperation Conference (RECC) promoting intra-regional relations and economic cooperation.

U.S.-AFGHAN RELATIONS: The first extensive American contact with Afghanistan was made by Josiah Harlan, an adventurer from Pennsylvania who was an adviser in Afghan politics in the 1830s and reputedly inspired Rudyard Kipling's story "The Man Who Would be King." After the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1934, the U.S. policy of helping developing nations raise their standard of living was an important factor in maintaining and improving U.S.-Afghan ties. From 1950 to 1979, U.S. foreign assistance provided Afghanistan with more than \$500 million in loans, grants, and surplus agricultural commodities to develop transportation facilities, increase agricultural production, expand the educational system, stimulate industry, and improve government administration.

In the 1950s, the U.S. declined Afghanistan's request for defense cooperation but extended an economic assistance program focused on the development of Afghanistan's physical infrastructure--roads, dams, and power plants. Later, U.S. aid shifted from infrastructure projects to technical assistance programs to help develop the skills needed to build a modern economy. The Peace Corps was active in Afghanistan between 1962 and 1979.

After the April 1978 coup, relations deteriorated. In February 1979, U.S. Ambassador Adolph "Spike" Dubs was murdered in Kabul after Afghan security forces burst in on his kidnapers. The U.S. then reduced bilateral assistance and terminated a small military training program. All remaining assistance agreements were ended after the December 1979 Soviet invasion.

Following the Soviet invasion, the United States supported diplomatic efforts to achieve a Soviet withdrawal. U.S. contributions to the refugee program in Pakistan played a major part in efforts to assist Afghans in need. This cross-border humanitarian assistance program aimed to increase Afghan self-sufficiency and help Afghans resist Soviet attempts to drive civilians out of the rebel-dominated countryside. During the period of Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, the U.S. provided about \$3 billion in military and economic assistance to Afghans and the resistance movement.

After the fall of the Taliban, the U.S. supported the emergence of a broad-based government, representative of all Afghans, and actively encouraged a UN role in the national reconciliation process in Afghanistan. The U.S. has made a long-term commitment to help Afghanistan rebuild itself after years of war. The U.S. and others in the international community currently provide resources and expertise to Afghanistan in a variety of areas, including humanitarian relief and assistance, capacity-building, security needs, counter-narcotic programs, and infrastructure projects. The U.S. also supports the Afghan Government in its efforts to establish a framework for a vibrant civil society, one that emphasizes democratic principles through a rule of law and creates accountable and transparent forms of government. The United States and its international partners remain committed to helping Afghans realize their vision for a country that is stable, democratic, and economically successful, and to an Afghan Government committed to the protection of women's rights, human rights, and religious tolerance.

Peace and Security: Programs in counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, stabilization operations, demining, and destruction of conventional weapons are critical components of U.S. counter-insurgency efforts in Afghanistan. Counter-terrorism funding will support Afghan leadership protection, terrorist interdiction and counter-terrorist finance programs administered by the Department of State. Funds will continue to support the mine action program and mobile weapons, ammunition, and explosive ordnance destruction teams, which meet humanitarian objectives and stimulate economic activity and reconstruction. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will provide significant funding to stabilization programs that directly address the root causes of conflict and instability. Programs will work with local communities in transition areas to promote stability, primarily in the south and east of the country, through community-based initiatives and capacity building to help mitigate conflict and isolate extremist influences. Technical assistance, analysis, and independent monitoring and evaluation will enhance the effects of the stabilization efforts, which will be closely coordinated with the military and with Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), in order to strengthen U.S. counter-insurgency efforts in priority districts. The narcotics industry fuels the insurgency and corrupts the economy and polity of Afghanistan. The U.S. counter-narcotics strategy will build the capability of the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan, expanding its operational and investigative capacity to interdict major traffickers and disrupt Taliban financing. The Department of State will continue to combat opium production and trafficking, sustaining and expanding the poppy-free status of the northern and central provinces of Afghanistan, where significant results have been achieved in permissive areas. The Good Performers' Initiative (GPI) will solidify gains in poppy-free or poppy-reduced provinces primarily in the eastern and southern provinces. USAID alternative livelihood programs will focus on licit job creation, improving commercial agriculture production, and establishing market linkages in poppy production-prone areas in order to create and grow a viable agri-business industry. USAID will improve transportation systems, develop agricultural processing facilities and storage networks, and expand irrigation in targeted areas.

Governing Justly and Democratically: The legitimacy of the Afghan government is undermined by widespread corruption, lack of governance capacity, and the inability to provide adequate social services to respond to the demands of the Afghan people, especially at the sub-national level. The U.S. must help build the capacity of the Afghan government at the national, provincial, and local levels to deliver services and earn the trust of the Afghan people. U.S. assistance will strengthen Afghan institutions at all levels to improve service delivery in both urban and rural areas. FY 2010 funding also will support parliamentary and district council elections, and will provide training for democratic political parties, civil society organizations, and the media. U.S. assistance will strengthen the rule of law in Afghanistan by helping to build the core capacities of the justice system. USAID will build the capacity of the judiciary and the legal education system, promoting a core law school curriculum. U.S. support will help integrate formal and informal justice systems and expand access to the rule of law to underserved populations, including women, through support to legal aid. The Department of State will help develop the Afghan corrections systems by training justice sector personnel to support police and counter-narcotics initiatives, improve police-prosecutor coordination, form a special narcotics prosecution unit, and to help to arrest, try and punish offenders. The Department of State will also support an anti-corruption unit within the Attorney General's Office to prosecute money laundering and high-level corruption. USAID will provide technical assistance to build the institutional capacity of key ministries and the Office of the President, while strengthening the Parliament to improve its oversight and work effectively with the Executive Branch and Judiciary. To extend the reach of good governance beyond Kabul, USAID will expand its sub-national governance program to work with Afghans to improve the performance and legitimacy of district, municipal, and provincial governments. USAID will also promote transparency and accountability to reduce opportunities for corruption. USAID and the Department of State will continue to support the strengthening of independent media and freedom of information through increased community radio, legislative protection of media, and journalist training. USAID support to civil society will strengthen over 150 non-governmental organizations, including many led by women. A key element of the comprehensive U.S. strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan is an effective inter-agency strategic communications program to counter radicalization and to build resilient communities that can serve as viable alternatives to violent extremists at the national, provincial, and local levels. The objectives of this program are to increase the capacity of local media, civil society organizations and the Afghan government to use new media technologies to foster democratic institutions. Funding will expand telecommunications capacity and infrastructure and strengthen linkages between the Afghan government and the people of Afghanistan. The program will have multiple components and will be implemented by the Department of State and USAID, in close consultation with the U.S. military.

Investing in People: USAID health programs will improve the quality of health service delivery and expand health care accessibility using host country contracting with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH). The programs will strengthen healthcare systems at both the provincial and central levels, and address health workforce needs through in-service and pre-service training. This will be accomplished through training, health service delivery, and continued capacity building within the MoPH. USAID education programs will improve educational quality at the primary and secondary levels (with a focus on literacy) and enhance the market relevance of education through workforce development activities. USAID will improve teacher quality through increased training, better learning materials, and the establishment of new secondary school spaces, especially for girls' education. USAID will address the workforce development needs of youth and females through market-relevant activities, such as literacy and productive skills, community-based secondary education, universities, and vocational education at post-primary levels. Finally, USAID plans to intensify efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, laying the foundation for host country contracting through the Ministry of Education. Capacity development activities will focus on key areas where improvements in Ministry performance will impact local perceptions of government effectiveness.

+USAID cash-for-work programs target unskilled labor and provide short-term jobs for urban and rural families, particularly under-employed youths at risk of insurgent influence in vulnerable areas, thus providing incomes while improving productive infrastructure and subsequent food production. These programs will target southern and eastern provinces threatened by drought conditions or potential political instability. Illustrative cash-for-work activities include canal cleaning, road rehabilitation, snow removal, flood protection, public building rehabilitation, and orchard/tree planting where feasible. PRT staff will be instrumental in executing cash-for-work programs, and the project will reflect the overall PRT goal of increasing sub-national governance and stability throughout Afghanistan.

Focus on Performance: With increased FY 2010 resources, the U.S. will expand programs designed to support licit sources of livelihood, particularly in rural areas. The alternative development programs will focus specifically in the southern and eastern areas of Afghanistan supporting projects, which will allow for wider sale of agricultural products. Funding will be used to support land and air cargo networks, road construction (particularly in Helmand and Kandahar), creating a dry and cold storage network, increasing the number of agro-processing facilities, and improving irrigation infrastructure (potentially reservoirs, check dams, and irrigation canals). These improvements will expand the markets for Afghan-grown fresh and dried produce, thereby providing a viable livelihood alternative to poppies. With additional funding for alternative development, the U.S. will be able to sustain and expand access to licit sources of livelihood, particularly in rural areas, allowing more families to benefit from alternative development activities. The FY 2008 target for this indicator was not met due to drought in 2008, project delays due to insecurity, and difficulty filling local and expatriate key personnel positions. There was a much higher level of precipitation in the last winter and thus, better conditions for the alternative development activities are anticipated. The security and staffing challenges are also being addressed.]Infrastructure is critical to sustained economic growth. As more Afghans have access to roads, power, and water, the U.S. Government is better able to support shared U.S. – Afghan goals of providing livelihoods, creating jobs, connecting with markets, improving health through safe water, and providing social services. With FY 2010 resources, USAID can invest in roads in rural as well as urban areas and expand “soft” investments in capacity building to ensure sustainability of “hard” U.S. investments. The U.S. Government’s focus in energy is to achieve commercial efficiency in electricity based on sound cost recovery practices, thus providing more reliable service to a growing base of clients, and expand the use of alternative energy. The commissioning of the Kabul 100 MW power plant should benefit all of Kabul, with a projected population approaching four million by 2009. The direct benefits to people of these infrastructure projects in Afghanistan will not be realized until 2012/2013 due to the time involved in the mobilization, procurement and delivery of equipment and materials. Other ongoing power programs will reach full completion in 2011, and USAID estimates that progress on these programs will start to benefit target areas in 2010. Many farmers in Afghanistan are engaged in subsistence or near-subsistence farming, with poor or no access to information on good agricultural practices, markets, or technology. Activities aim to reduce farmers’ vulnerability to natural disasters and food shortages, improve incomes, and sustain livelihoods. The increased assistance in FY 2010 will allow the U.S. Government to significantly expand the base of farmers benefiting from tools and training to improve their productivity, increase product quality, and secure links with markets. By doing so, there will be an increase in employment opportunities, higher incomes of rural households both on and off-farm, as well as a contribution to the overall security of Afghanistan. Assistance will promote agricultural growth in food, feed and other higher value crops at each step in the value chain. A robust agricultural economy will play a major role in helping to eliminate poppy production and move the country to both economic and political stability.

Economic Growth: Job creation and sustained economic growth are essential to reduce support for the insurgency in Afghanistan. Consistent with the Afghan National Development Strategy, U.S. assistance will foster economic growth, supporting a broad program of infrastructure rehabilitation, agricultural development, trade, financial sector development, and private sector expansion. Agricultural programs will increase overall agricultural production and promote commercial agricultural growth nationwide. The

U.S. Government will work with the Afghan government and private sector associations to provide technical assistance, sales promotion, customer development, and trade facilitation programs to Afghan farmers. Customer development programs will facilitate sales of products to Afghan and export customers. Assistance will support the expanded use of local and foreign fairs, trade delegations, foreign sales offices, marketing programs and other promotion activities along with intensive support to facilitate air cargo, sea cargo, trans-border shipment and customs or export license-related concerns. Funds will be used to develop a domestic logistics system, including trucking and warehousing, and a cold storage system, for both mobile and fixed cold storage. Assistance will also introduce required food safety and pest- risk systems; support packaging and post-harvest handling systems necessary for exporting Afghan products; and provide necessary infrastructure (such as irrigation) and help facilitate air, sea and transit shipments. USAID economic growth programs will further develop the financial sector, help increase the outreach of financial services throughout the country, and create credit access opportunities for micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises. The United States will seek to increase growth and competitiveness in the private sector, and improve labor force skills. Funds will promote investment and job creation, strengthen economic policy, support regulatory and fiscal reforms, further enhance Central Bank operations, and improve the enabling environment for private sector growth. A new trade capacity initiative will improve the current trade regime and enhance the private sector's ability to respond to market opportunities, removing impediments to cross-border trade. U.S. support for land administration reform will continue in order to increase land tenure security as possible throughout the country. To support counter-insurgency efforts and promote economic development, USAID will continue to focus on the southern and eastern parts of the country through an expanded road construction program, emphasizing improved regional transit routes and engineered non-paved roads that link rural communities. On all projects, the U.S. will consult closely with local communities and sub-national governments to determine their needs and work with them on project design, execution and evaluation. Roads that connect Afghanistan to its neighbors will increase export levels, thereby improving the Afghan economy and creating employment. In FY 2010, USAID will rehabilitate the Bamyán-Dushi road, key sections along the East-West corridor connecting Pakistan and Iran, and the North-South corridor connecting Uzbekistan to Pakistan. Key transport hubs will be upgraded to facilitate movement of goods and people from the Pakistan border to Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan. In order to sustain the road assets, USAID will strengthen the capability of the Afghan Government to procure and manage the services of local firms to maintain the roads. USAID will also support the establishment of a Road Authority to consolidate transport sector functions and the creation of a Road Fund dedicated to financing road construction and maintenance. Electricity ranks consistently among the top concerns of Afghan citizens. It is essential to increased economic growth and job creation, as many industries (including agro-processing) require a substantial increase in electricity that is not possible without major investments in power facilities. To increase access to reliable power supply, USAID will promote the use of indigenous energy resources, including a 100 MWS gas-fired power plant in Sheberghan. Transmission lines will be rehabilitated to transport power from the Kajaki Hydroelectric Power Plant to the southern provinces. With increased security, the capacity of the Kajaki Dam will also be expanded to support a new 100 MW power plant and increased water supply for agricultural production. For the rural areas that are not connected to the grid, USAID will promote the development of renewable energy systems. USAID will strengthen the operational efficiency of electric utilities to help ensure their viability and the sustainability of power generation, transmission and distribution services. Working with the provincial Ministries of Health and Agriculture, the U.S. Government will continue to focus on reducing food insecurity and improving both the health and livelihoods of vulnerable families. The program will help Afghanistan reduce malnutrition rates of children under five years of age, improve health practices of pregnant and lactating women, and increase farmers' incomes through improved agricultural production and marketing opportunities. USAID will build the capacity of local government officials and beneficiaries to respond to natural disasters like localized droughts and flooding.